Educationally backward blocks in U.P. and Chhattisgarh

2792. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of the educationally backward blocks identified in Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh;

(b) the number of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas opened in these States; and

(c) the criteria adopted by these States to open these Vidyalayas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) Out of 746 educationally backward blocks (EBBs)in U.P. and 99 EBBs in Chhattisgarh, 25 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas have been opened in U.P. and 51 in Chhattisgarh. The States have opened these schools in eligible blocks under the scheme.

Literacy in rural areas

†2793. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that although Government had initiated various steps to improve the literacy rate in rural areas, the level of literacy in rural area has been far below as compared to the uban areas;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken further by Government to improve the literacy in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) As per Census 2001, the difference in the Urban-Rural literacy rate has declined from 28 percentage points in 1991 (Urban-73.08% & Rural-44.69%) to 21 percentage points in 2001 (Urban-79.9% & Rural-58.7%).

(b) The reasons for low literacy rate in rural areas include growth in population, poverty, gender discrimination, lack of infrastructure, and lack of awareness about relevance of education.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) Universalisation of Elementary Education and eradication of adult illiteracy form the two-pronged strategy for improving the literacy rate of the country. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a comprehensive programme for universalizing quality Elementary Education by 2010.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) is entrusted with the target of achieving a sustainable threshold level of 75% literacy by 2007. The thrust areas of NLM are improving female literacy in low female literacy areas, organizing projects for eradication of residual illiteracy in districts which have substantial number of illiterates, setting up of continuing education centres for providing opportunities for life-long learning to the neo-literates and imparting vocational training to neo-literates through Jan Shikshan Sansthans. A large proportion of the beneficiaries under these programmes/schemes are from the rural areas. Recently, a special literacy drive for eradication of residual illiteracy in 150 districts, which have the lowest literacy rates in the country, has been launched. Majority of these districts are also in rural areas.

Infrastructure and funds for NCW

2794. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he has assured the members of the National Commission for Women that Government would provide a building and other necessary infrastructure with required funds for smooth functioning of the Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether under the new set up women can register complaints "online", and

(d) if so, the extent to which this would help to address the issue of harassment of women?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) As informed by the National Commission for Women (NCW), during the deliberations on the occasion of the inauguration of the portal of National Resource Centre for Women on 9.9.2005, the Hon'ble Minister for Human